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*Interview With Paul Johnson, British Journalist, Author of Modern Times: The World From the '20s to the '80s*

## "There's a Certain Quiet Glee" Over U.S. Troubles

**Q** Mr. Johnson, why do you think the world has such a love-hate relationship with the United States?

**A** America is the richest, the most powerful country in the world. People in the West know in their hearts they're very dependent on America and are, in their rational moods, grateful. But, if you're dependent on someone you tend to resent them. So when America gets into a bit of difficulty, as over the hostage crisis in Lebanon, there's a certain quiet glee.

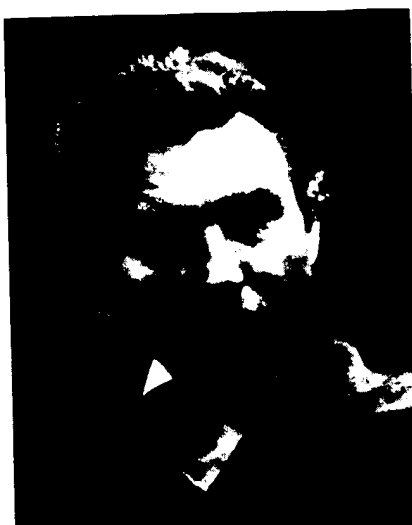
**Q** But in some parts of the world, dislike of America goes beyond envy—

**A** Of course. That applies to the Middle East, probably to a lot of Latin American countries and to a certain number of African countries. There, the hatred of America's power and the feeling that it epitomizes the more-corrupt and brutal side of the West is paramount.

**Q** Is that portrait justified?

**A** If you look back over the whole of history, you can't come across any

other leading power—with the possible exception of Britain in the 19th century—which has exercised its power in the world in such an unselfish, prudent and sensible manner as America has over the past 40 years.



**Q** Why doesn't much of the world see America in that light?

**A** Partly, I think, because the America projected by its own media is not favorable. Take the image of the CIA: What many American newspapers, magazines and television networks project is a kind of worldwide conspiracy by the CIA. I think that is one reason why American aircraft get hijacked and American citizens get kidnapped—because this false image of America is actually believed by humble, ordinary people out there.

**Q** Is there anything the U.S. might do to counter these negative feelings?

**A** The worst thing is to go around asking to be loved. That invites contempt. The best thing Americans can do is do what they believe right, do it firmly and above all do it quietly without a lot of shouting and arguing. The hate element doesn't come to the surface when America is acting strongly. It comes up when America appears to be weak and indecisive.